

Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners Copps, McDowell, Clyburn and Baker,

As a video operator (interpreter) employee of Sorenson Video Relay Service, I have the great privilege of assisting deaf and hearing individuals with communication via videophone in American Sign Language using VRS. As a child of deaf parents, who did not have this service I know the great value it is to the deaf community. In those days I had to interpret calls at ten years old and got most of the communication wrong. Both of my parents have now died, but I know it would have changed their lives to be able to have equal phone access to carry out their personal and business calls as hearing people do. Their quality of life as an independent member of society would have been greatly enhanced and their children's if they would have had access to VRS. I know first hand that VRS has been a technical huge transforming step in the life of the deaf and others and their children.

I was deeply disturbed to see the Commission's recent Public Notice on VRS rates. These proposals would put an end to VRS as we know it. My employer has already informed me that if these proposed rates are adopted, our company would head into bankruptcy. This would be disastrous for deaf VRS users.

I have been a professional interpreter and Rehabilitation Counselor for the deaf for over thirty years. The complexity of deafness and how it impacts the deaf person's ability to communicate is varied and multiple depending on many factors. Going back to the technology of the TTY is very inferior for the deaf person whose first language is American Sign Language not English typing. VRS provides them their first language that they are fluent in to communicate with the outside world.

The FCC should be increasing the availability and use of VRS, not cutting back. You should adopt a rate that encourages continuing improvements in VRS technology and continues to improve services levels. Recent developments in VRS are a good example of how the service can be improved, such as enhanced 911 services, 10 digit numbering, and a larger and better-trained pool of interpreters and better videophones with an array of enhanced features. Monthly payments for broadband are a big expense for many deaf people, and instead of trying to cut back on VRS, you should be exploring

ways to make VRS over broadband more affordable to deaf individuals.

The rates are so low that it would be the end of VRS as we know it today. No provider would seek to provide VRS at the low rates proposed by the FCC.

I am over sixty years old now and I have seen and worked for many businesses. I can easily say Sorenson VRS is one of the most honest and high standard places I have ever worked. They have grown not because they are greedy as some smaller business would have you believe but because they have poured their hard work and effort and heart into creating the best possible products for their customers and employees. I have never been treated as well as I have by Sorenson. They never stop developing better technology for their customers and workers. The standards to qualify for employment at Sorenson are high. Consequently their workers are very honest hard working people. They are successful because they have done the above.

I appeal to you as a child of deaf parents with the heart and knowledge of their world to not send them back to the Stone Age but continue to enhance their ADA and human right to equal access to communication in their language to give them an equal quality of life as all Americans.

I appeal to you too as an employee who as with many other thousands of Sorenson employees need this job to be able to survive in this economy. It has been an oasis for many American deaf and hearing employees. The many loss of jobs if we are forced into bankruptcy would deepen the American unemployment and economy even further. I know how hard it is for deaf to find jobs and interpreters in our community where the market is already saturated. My husband was laid off over a year and I am the only source of employment in our family. It would devastate us. We would have to move where there is more need for interpreters. At 64 that would be very hard.

Please look beyond the numbers money etc to this very noble cause that in the end is all that matters in our short time on earth. You are providing the deaf with state of the art communication access and many jobs for Americans.

I am going to trust the FCC will do the right thing and establish a fair and predictable rate for VRS that will encourage VRS providers to invest in improving VRS and reaching more deaf individuals. There are many still isolated and lost in a very hearing world.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Jordan VRS operator

(interpreter) Sorenson Colorado Springs, CO